DARK HORSE COMICS
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17
$2.50 US
$3.40 CAN
ALIENS: ALIEN
ARCUDI - MENDOZA
STAR WARS: DROIDS
THORSLAND - HUGHES - MUSHYNSKY
PREDATOR: THE HUNTED CITY
MOORE - GREGORY - RODRIGUEZ

DARK HORSE #17 COMICS™

STAR WARS: DROIDS 1

PART 1 OF 3
SCRIPT: DAN THORSLAND
PENCILS: BILL HUGHES
INKS: ANDY MUSHYNSKY
LETTERER: BILL PEARSON
COLORS: PAMELA RAMBO

DARK HORSE COMMENTS 9

ALIENS: ALIEN 11

PART 1 OF 3
SCRIPT: JOHN ARCUDI
ART: PAUL MENDOZA
LETTERER: VICKIE WILLIAMS
COLORS: JAMES SINCLAIR

PREDATOR: THE HUNTED CITY 19

PART 2 OF 3
SCRIPT: CHARLES MOORE
PENCILS: D. ALEXANDER GREGORY
INKS: JASEN RODRIGUEZ
LETTERER: BILL PEARSON
COLORS: GREGORY WRIGHT

COVER ART: BILL HUGHES
COVER COLORS: MATTHEW HOLLINGSWORTH
EDITORS: RANDY STRADLEY, EDWARD MARTIN III
DESIGN: SCOTT TICE
ORIGINAL ALIEN DESIGN BY: H.R. GIGER

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PUBLISHER
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NEIL HANKERSON

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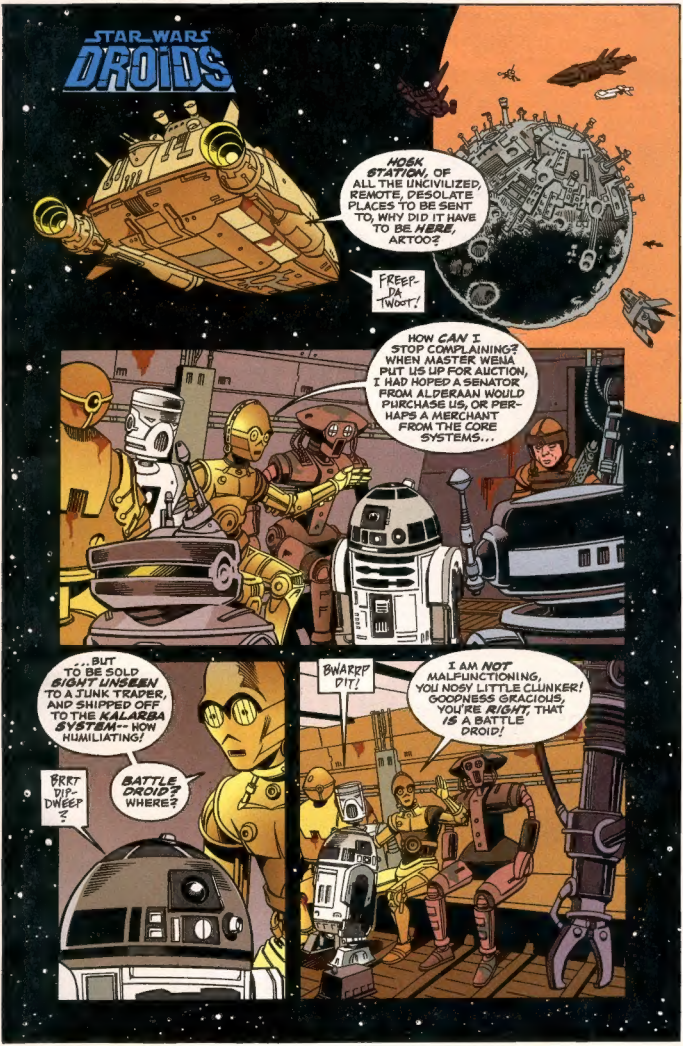
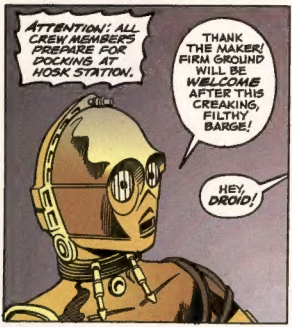
Printed in Canada

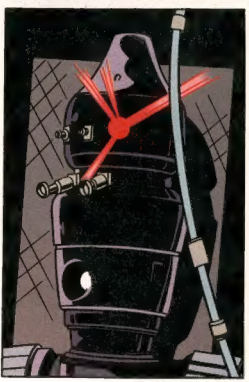

STAR WARS
DROIDS
HOSK STATION, OF ALL THE UNCIVILIZED, REMOTE, DESOLATE PLACES TO BE SENT TO, WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE HERE, ARTOO?
FREEP-DA-TWOOT!
HOW CAN I STOP COMPLAINING? WHEN MASTER WENA PUT US UP FOR AUCTION, I HAD HOPED A SENATOR FROM ALDERAAN WOULD PURCHASE US, OR PERHAPS A MERCHANT FROM THE CORE SYSTEMS...
...BUT TO BE SOLD SIGHT UNSEEN TO A JUNK TRADER, AND SHIPPED OFF TO THE KALARBA SYSTEM-- HOW HUMILIATING!
BRRT DIP-DWEEP ?-
BATTLE DROID? WHERE?
BWARRP DIT!
I AM NOT MALFUNCTIONING, YOU NOSY LITTLE CLUNKER! GOODNESS GRACIOUS, YOU'RE RIGHT, THAT IS A BATTLE DROID!

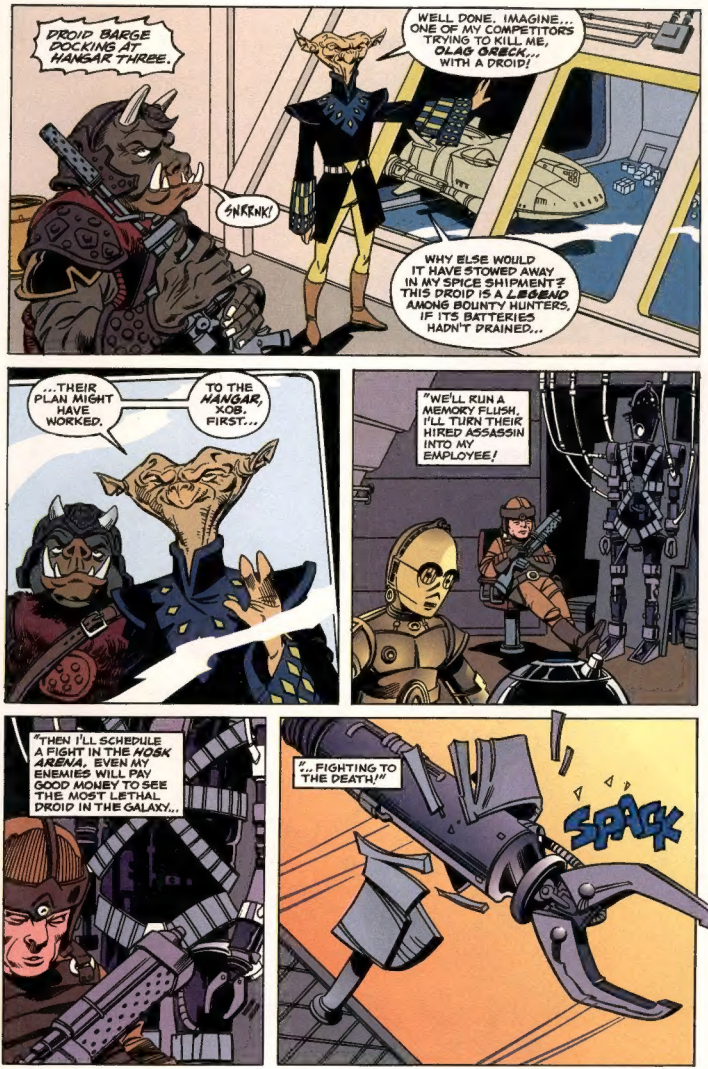
I'VE NEVER ACTUALLY SEEN ONE! HOW FRIGHTENING -- THEY SHOULD ALL BE SCRAPPED! KILLING IS NONE OF A DROID'S BUSINESS!
FWA-DEEP!
WELL, SWITCHED OFF OR NOT, IF IT EVER BROKE LOOSE... THE VERY THOUGHT MAKES MY SERVOS TWITCH!


ATTENTION: ALL CREW MEMBERS PREPARE FOR DOCKING AT HOSK STATION.
THANK THE MAKER! FIRM GROUND WILL BE WELCOME AFTER THIS CREAKING, FILTHY BARGE!
HEY, DROID!

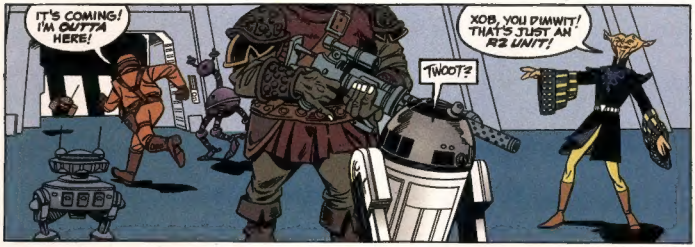
I DON'T WANT ANY DISTRACTIONS FROM THIS GUY! SHUT UP OR I'LL SWITCH YOU OFF!
CERTAINLY, SIR! I DO APOLOGIZE!

YEAH? JUST SAVE IT, AND DON'T MAKE ME KEEP AN EYE ON YOU!




DROID BARGE DOCKING AT HANGAR THREE.
WELL DONE. IMAGINE... ONE OF MY COMPETITORS TRYING TO KILL ME, OLAG GRECK,... WITH A DROID!
SNRRNK!
WHY ELSE WOULD IT HAVE STOWED AWAY IN MY SPICE SHIPMENT? THIS DROID IS A LEGEND AMONG BOUNTY HUNTERS, IF ITS BATTERIES HADN'T DRAINED...
...THEIR PLAN MIGHT HAVE WORKED.
TO THE HANGAR, XOB. FIRST...
"WE'LL RUN A MEMORY FLUSH, I'LL TURN THEIR HIRED ASSASSIN INTO MY EMPLOYEE!
"THEN I'LL SCHEDULE A FIGHT IN THE KOSK ARENA, EVEN MY ENEMIES WILL PAY GOOD MONEY TO SEE THE MOST LETHAL DROID IN THE GALAXY...
"... FIGHTING TO THE DEATH!"
SPACK

IT'S STILL IN CYBEROSTASIS, SO IT POSES NO--
BARDO! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO MY SHIP?
⇒KAFF-KAFF!⇐ THAT THING... IT GOT LOOSE!
GOT LOOSE?! HOW?! THOSE SHACKLES ARE MADE OF CARBONITE!
PROGRAM TRAP.. BOOSTED ITS SERVOS WHEN WE WERE LANDING! IT'S TEARING THE SHIP APART! ⇒KAFF!⇐ YOU CAN'T CONTROL IT! IT'S GONNA GET YOU!
GRRNNLK?
VEEP!
TWOOT!
SSSNORRCK?!
AAAARGH!
WHIRRR
VRRT-VRRT

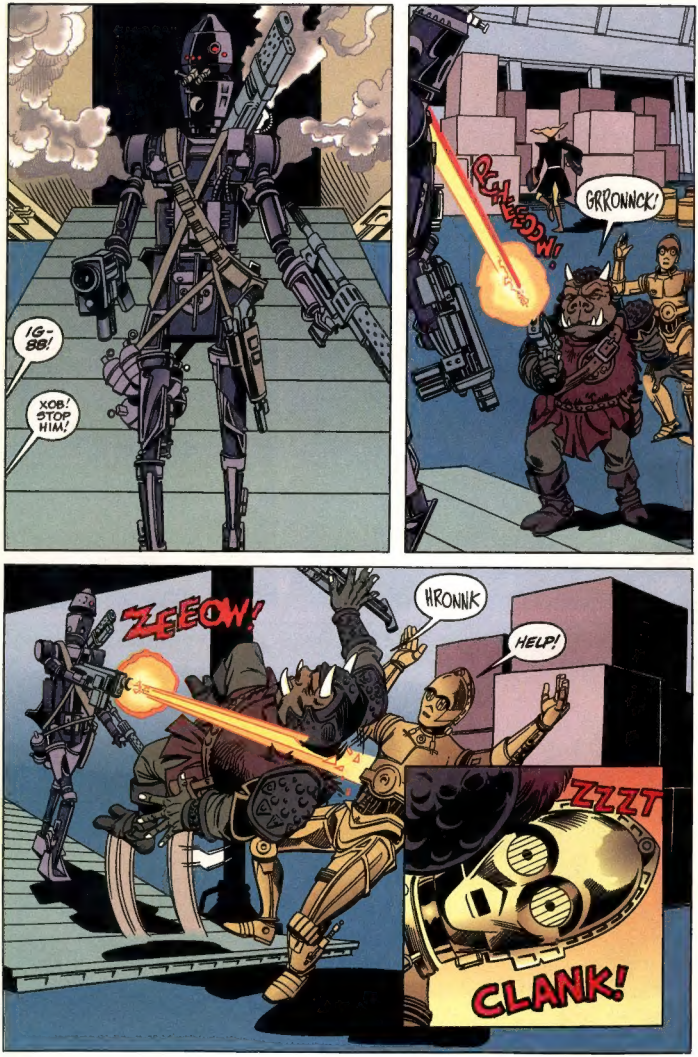

IT'S COMING! I'M OUTTA HERE!
TWOOT?
XOB, YOU D'IMWIT! THAT'S JUST AN R2 UNIT!

VRRT-CLANK VRRT-CLANK
GET IN THE BARGE AND EARN YOUR PAY!
GRRASSNCK!

VRRT-CLANK VRRT--
OH...

...MY!
A PROTOCOL DROID?!

YOU TORE UP MY SHIP? YOU DON'T LOOK OUT-FITTED FOR FIGHTING!
OH, GOODNESS GRACIOUS NO! NOT ME, SIR-- HIM!


IG-88!
XOB! STOP HIM!
GRRONNCK!
ZEEOW!
HRONNK
HELP!
ZZZT
CLANK!

ATTENTION! BLASTER DISCHARGE IN HANGAR! SECURITY DEPLOYED! AREA LOCKED!
LOCKED?! NO!
TWOOT?
BEEOWW
TAK TAK
VRRT-CLIK BZZT
PING
ZEEEN

TWHOOOooo...
XOB... XOB! GET UP--HE'S GOTTEN AWAY!
GRRWK...
THE DEADLIEST DROID IN THE GALAXY... LOOSE IN MY STATION! WRETCHED MACHINES!
KLANK!
BRZZT
OH, MY! WHAT HAP-PENED? ARTOO?
YOU KNOW THAT R2 UNIT?
WHY, YES SIR! HE AND I HAVE WORKED TOGETHER FOR QUITE SOME TIME. PERHAPS I CAN BE OF SOME ASSISTANCE IN LOCATING HIM?
YOU CAN BE ALL ASSISTANCE! WITH OR WITHOUT YOU, WE'LL TRACK DOWN IG-88, AND IF YOUR LITTLE FRIEND IS HELPING THAT STEEL-PLATED KILLER...
... I'LL MELT THEM BOTH DOWN TO SLAG!

CONTINUED!

COMMENTS

10956 SE MAIN ST, MILWAUKIE, OR 97222

Edward here, with more words and letters from our dearly loved readers. One of the best things about working with an anthology is to see two letters come in, one praising a particular story, recommending that it be held up as an example for all other stories to aspire to, and the next letter thrashing it unmercifully, burning the remains and burying them too deeply for animals to dig up and, tragically, eat. Our first letter, from Joey Marchese, starts out like this (except that I re-typed his letter on account as I haven't got enough work to do already):

"The Universal Studios license is currently Dark Horse's best."

Dear Randy,

The debut of the new and improved ***Dark Horse Comics*** was a pleasant surprise, yet not a far cry from the previous twelve issues. This anthology has always remained at the top of things, and it will apparently remain that way. Yet before I mention any specifics, I've heard that a "Mature Readers" label will be slapped on ***DHC***. While that may not affect you or me, it's a fact that many younger readers buy this title because of the visibility of the characters. (Heck, Aliens is a toy line and based on an R-rated movie!!) Above everything, I want ***DHC*** to last and get the largest audience possible. Any thoughts?

The second part of **Predator**: "Bad Blood" was my favorite installment, with some truly astounding work by Derek Thompson and the versatile Andie Parks — Evan Dorkin's script wasn't exactly in the slouch department, either. The Predator isn't one of my favorite characters, but Evan's script wove an interesting tale while utilizing some unique storytelling styles, such as radio narration in #12. I'll be looking forward to the next part as well as more work by this team. Robbie Busch also did a nice job on the coloring.

Running a close second was **The Thing from Another World** "Questionable Research." The Universal Studios license is currently Dark Horse's best, allowing some truly excellent work to be created, especially on the film adaptations. I've never seen The Thing's film debut of the 1950s, but it definitely translates well into comic books. Edward Martin's script left me waiting for more action, since eight pages is not really enough to tell a story. Ted Naifeh and "Moose" Baumann also did a great job, and Ted's pencils surpassed his work as James O'Barr's replacement in the ***Comics' Greatest World*** issues. It was also nice to see more of Moose's talent, considering my only previous exposure is his coloring at Malibu. The inks were scratchy yet appealing and gave the impression of an overall fine story.

Aliens: "Backsplash" was the weakest part of #13, despite the story with the coveted lead spot and cover. Kilian Plunkett is definitely a talent find, though, and his work is distinct from anything else I've seen. Colored by the talented Matthew Hollingsworth, Kilian's artwork looks like a cross between Keith Giffen and Walt Simonson with a pinch of who-knows-what. I might check out the upcoming Aliens miniseries just to catch a glimpse at Plunkett's future. Jim Woodring's story, on the other hand, couldn't convey much with a total of 16 pages and read more like an introduction than an actual story. Again, another reason to check out ***Labyrinth***, right?

As for the format changes, the new letter column is something worth mentioning. I love the new look because it allows more opinions to be printed, although with the long letters you're getting, I don't know if anything's changed! Thanks for your time, and thanks for keeping me at the edge of my seat and ***DHC*** is the best of the best.

See you in 30.

Joey Marchese
P.O. Box 2197
Union, NJ 07083-2197

Joey, just to settle your fears, we are not planning on labeling **Dark Horse Comics** *now or in the near future. You should have your Magic 8-Ball® adjusted. However, you bring up an excellent point. The problem with any kind of label is that it is usually perceived as meaning "Only For Those Sick And Perverted Types Who Really Ought To Be In Treatment But Haven't Been Caught Yet," rather than "Look, This Story Contains Some Pretty Mature Themes For Your Typical Eight-Year-Old, So You Might Want To Give It A Once-Over First," which is what we usually mean with a "Mature Readers" label Mature — nothing more, nothing less. But, as you pointed out, the very themes underlying such properties as Aliens and Predator are violent and bloody, just as in the movies. Understanding and expecting that is the responsibility of the reader. But I could be wrong. The simple fact of the matter is that we want* **Dark Horse Comics** *to reach as large an audience as possible. Maybe starting off with about 300,000 copies.*

If you want to check out more of Kilian Plunkett's terrific art, he's painting some splendid covers for the **Droids** *miniseries and a complete story by him and Peter Janes will be appearing in future issues of* ***Dark Horse Presents****, our black-and-white anthology of cutting-edge and eclectic material. It's cool!*

Dear Randy, Ed, and folks,

Hey! New letter column title. I like it. ***Dark Horse Comics*** #13 was very good indeed! Surprised to hear that from me? I bet you are. I actually did like all three stories in here. I am glad that **Aliens**' "Backsplash" is only two issues long, though.

The Thing from Another World, "Questionable Research" story looks interesting. This story has a long pedigree. John Campbell's story was the basis for the two movies and then this story. I think that this story, judging from the beginning, has a lot of potential. I am looking forward to seeing where it goes from here.

Predator: "Bad Blood" is good. I am glad to see some regular folks involved here. I'll be interested in seeing what happens to this story as we go into the conclusion. My compliments to Evan for a very well-written Predator story. I never was a big Predator fan, but this is a good story and I have to admit that if Evan was to do another Predator story, I would probably get it.

A fine job by everybody involved here. I have complained before about too many licensed characters in here, but if the stories are going to be this good throughout, then I guess I will just have to shut up, smile, and enjoy the book. Thanks!

Until next time.

Carl Pietrantonio
517 Idylwood Lane
Laredo, TX 78041

I'm glad you liked this issue, Carl. The pedigree of **The Thing From Another World** *is even longer than you think. Check out our initial two-issue miniseries, written by Chuck Pfarrer and painted by John Higgins and the following four-issue miniseries* **The Thing from Another World: Climate of Fear**, *written by John Arcudi and drawn by Jim Somerville, Robert Jones, and Brian Garvey. We've just published the collected edition of those two series, which you can order by calling our toll-free ordering number, 1-800-862-0052. As if that isn't enough, by this time you should have already seen the first couple of issues of* **The Thing from Another World: Eternal Vows**, *written by David de Vries, pencilled by Paul Gulacy, and inked by Dan Davis. Beautiful and spooky!*

I hope you've had a chance to see more of Evan Dorkin's script work in the **Predator: Bad Blood** *miniseries. If any Predator book deserves its own independent soundtrack of razorblade thrash metal, that one does!*

Dear Randy,

One of your comments in ***Dark Horse Comics*** #12 bothered me, the statement that the title's "primary *raison d'être* is to provide a showcase for our licensed characters."

As a way of checking, I typed up a quick index to the first dozen issues. I found some figures that surprised me. There have been seventeen stories begun since the title began, and four of those have been of a non-licensed nature: "Mad Dogs," "Renegade," "Time Cop," and the *X* prelude. That's less than a quarter of the stories overall. (And "Renegade," though non-licensed, was laying ground for the current ***Aliens/Predator*** series!)

In contrast, there have been three Alien stories, four Predator stories, two RoboCop stories, and one each for Godzilla, Indiana Jones, James Bond, and *Star Wars*.

That's not necessarily bad, but it does seem hopelessly limiting. Granted, this title does have to define a niche separate from that of ***Dark Horse Presents***. But does it have to be at the expense of variety? There must be serials that would find a comfortable home in a comic that didn't bear the "Mature Readers" label of its companion title.

Or perhaps I'm just not the typical ***DHC*** reader. Admittedly, my favorite comics are *Bone*, *A Distant Soil*, and ***Concrete***, three titles which, apart from being serials, each express the personal vision of their respective creator. Beyond those, I'm enjoying ***Aliens/Predator***, ***John Byrne's Next Men***, and ***Ray Bradbury Comics***, and I'm looking forward to the new ***Sin City***, ***Star Wars***, and ***Nexus*** titles.

To be honest, the only thing that keeps me ordering ***DHC*** is the belief that I might miss something worthwhile. Of the seventeen stories, I have enjoyed (read, been delighted by) only five of them. Those ranged from the hilarious (**Aliens**: "Taste") to entertaining and revealing (***Star Wars***: "Tales of the Jedi") to fascinating and almost enthralling ("Renegade").

So I'm not sure how much longer I'll be around. But many more issues that have two Predator stories and one Aliens story will make leaving that much easier a choice.

Thanks for the chance to express my thoughts.

Matt Bracher
10827 SE 230th Street
Kent, WA 98031-3466

When Randy and I began editing this book, we made a decision that the readers would receive a variety of work unlike anything currently being published. We also decided that the same license appearing more than once per issue was taboo. I think you will find that **DHC** *#12 was the exception, rather than the rule. Your letter intrigued me and I drew up a reference sheet for all issues of* **Dark Horse Comics**, *from #1 to #17 (this hot little issue), by page count. This also gave me an opportunity to examine what sort of stories we have published in* **DHC**. *It really does spread all over the board, Matt, if you aren't dividing the stories into licensed/non-licensed work. Predator stories have enjoyed the best share, appearing in 22% of* **DHC***'s story pages. Less than a quarter. Aliens follows with 14%. I won't go into the other percentages, but so far, twelve different licenses/properties have appeared in* **Dark Horse Comics**. *For only seventeen issues, I think that's quite a span. And, of course, there's even more coming up. Keep reading!*

Dear ***DHC*** crew,

I read about ***DHC*** getting a major facelift in issue #13. I hope it'll be better than ever. I've only been with you guys for a few issues so far, but I intend to stick with it. I recently read **Predator**: "Bad Blood." It was totally bitchen! I don't even know why! I guess it was the idea of an insane, bloodthirsty Predator being chased by its own police. I had just begun to lose interest in Predator. Not anymore.

Plus, I love **Aliens**: "Backsplash." The idea was pretty interesting, but I have a few questions. 1. Why the hell were they down in the cavern testing the new Plasma Projectors when they could be out in the open? 2. Why did they make the suits acid-resistant and not acid-proof? 3. And then, on page 6 of "Backsplash," why were that guy's guts hanging out? 4. My final question is, Does ***DHC*** come in at the comic shops dated one month late? Because when I bought ***DHC*** on September 4th (my birthday), on the inside it was dated August and it was a new arrival. Thanks for your time.

Your faithful fan,

Zack Stanley
RR2, Box 39
Beggs, OK 74421

Zack, you are such a faithful fan we've selected you as our more-or-less arbitrary winner of the Letter of the Month. *Your prize is a Special Limited Edition copy of* **Comics' Greatest World** *#1, with the groovy platinum cover.*

I'm happy to hear you enjoyed ***Predator***. *"Bad Blood." I hope you like the miniseries as much (you don't think we would stop such a vein-popping story that early, do you?) as you liked the story.*

Now, in answer to your questions...

1. Aliens rarely come out in the open. They're pretty shy sometimes. More important, the Marines were pretty sure of the new Projectors, so it makes sense that they haven't anything to be afraid of. Why not *go into the cavern?*

2. Acid is tricky stuff. A strong enough acid will react with just about anything. Acid-resistant is probably the best they could do. Maybe the Colonial Marines are undergoing budget cuts at this time?

3. Because on page five, he suffered a Partial Gutectomy.

4. **DHC** *ships from the printer the last week of every month. By the time some comics shops receive it, the next month has already rolled around. If we put a different date in the book, the U.S. Government would collapse. Blame Daylight Savings Time. I still haven't figured it out myself yet.*

"Questionable Research was great."

Hey Randy,

First off, I *love* the sleek new look adopted by ***Dark Horse Comics*** #13. Cool new lettercol title too, but why is it set in the middle of the book, instead of at the end? Okay, enough nit-picking! On to the reviews!

Part two of **Aliens**, "Backsplash" was good, if a bit pointless. Did we really need to see another blood-drenched horror show? Woodring and Plunkett's ***Aliens: Labyrinth*** series is much better, with an involving complex plot to offset the graphic violence.

The Thing from Another World: "Questionable Research" was great, however. Edward Martin III's plot was involving and addressed a plot point I knew **TTFAW** would get around to sooner or later. As with the first *Alien* and *Predator* movies, John Carpenter's *The Thing* was just an effectively creepy fright flick. But now we've got the ever-present scientists who want to study and control The Thing, as with Dark Horse's Aliens and Predator series. Will they never learn? The art by Naifeh and Baumann was impressively detailed.

Predator: "Bad Blood" is getting interesting. Evan Dorkin's writing is solid and Derek Thompson and Ande Parks' art is just great. Cool Predator invisibility effect on page 25, too. Well, I'll leave you to your good work now. See ya in thirty.

Robert Knaus
320 Fisher Street
Walpole, MA 02081

I'm glad you liked the new look, Robert. With all those arrows, I like to fantasize that we're getting to the point in each and every issue. Ha-ha. Please don't hurt me after that one. Our sleek new design is courtesy of Scott Tice, one of our light-speed designers. We consider "Dark Horse Comments" to be one of the features in **Dark Horse Comics**, *as much as any story (although I doubt it will have its own cover), so it will jump around, just like the stories.*

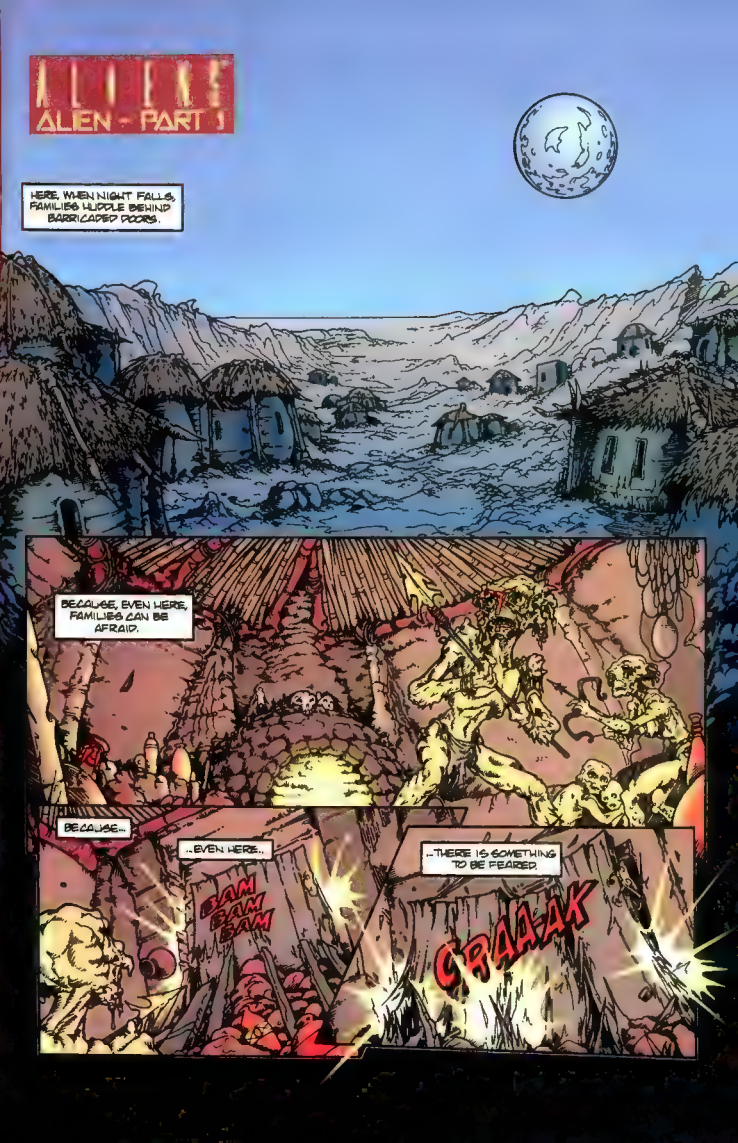
Next issue, **Dark Horse Comics** *#18 features part 2 of "Alien," John Arcudi's terrifying tale of a village ripped apart by the mysterious Night Reaper. Young Suom and his hunting party finally locate the beast, but it may be the last thing they ever do.*

Also, in part 2 of **Star Wars***: "Droids," IG-88, the infamous battledroid, forces R2-D2 to help steal a spaceship in a daring escape from the Hosk space station.*

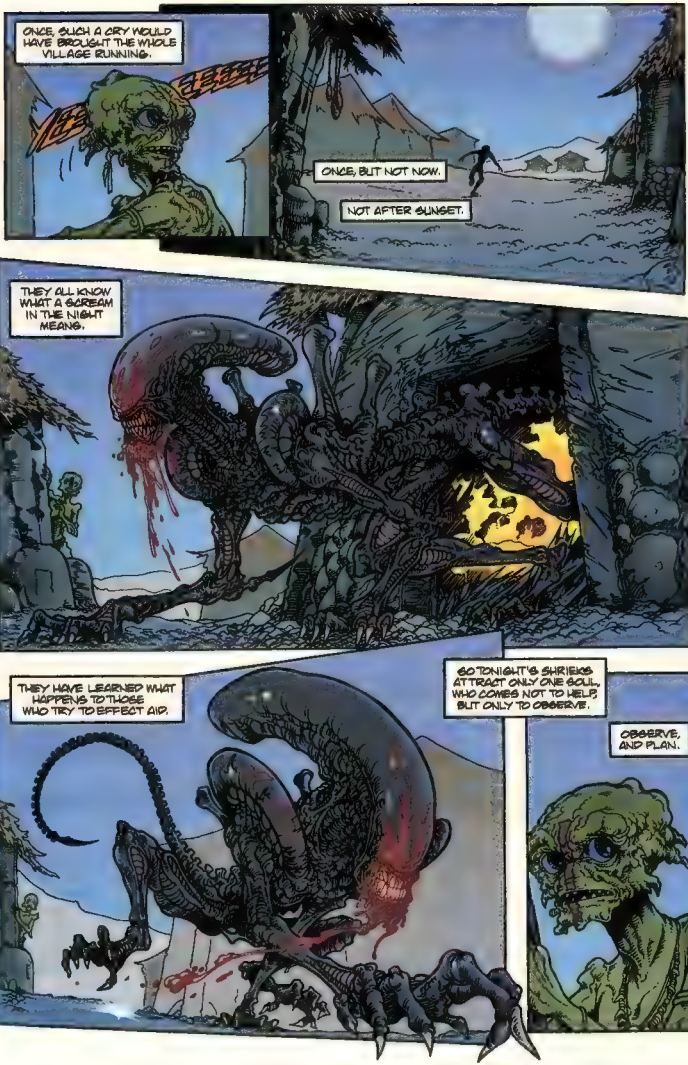
In this issue, we also bring you the taut conclusion to ***Predator***: *"The Hunted City," where Tony Vicenzo finally has his chance to finish that fight.*

Don't miss our next issue, shipping February 22, 1994, unless the world explodes, in which case, that issue will be indefinitely postponed.

—Edward Martin III


ALIENS
ALIEN - PART 1
HERE, WHEN NIGHT FALLS, FAMILIES HUDDLE BEHIND BARRICADED DOORS.
BECAUSE, EVEN HERE, FAMILIES CAN BE AFRAID.
BECAUSE...
..EVEN HERE...
BAM BAM BAM
..THERE IS SOMETHING TO BE FEARED.
CRAAAK

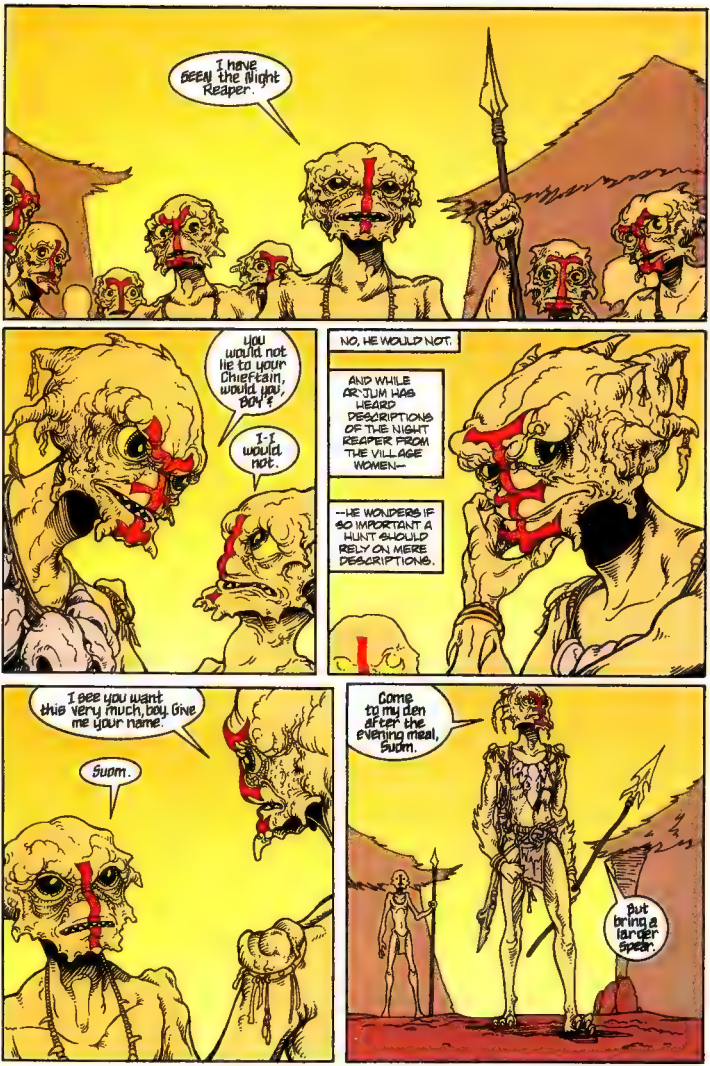
GRR
AAASHH
YEEEEEAAAAAHHHHHH!

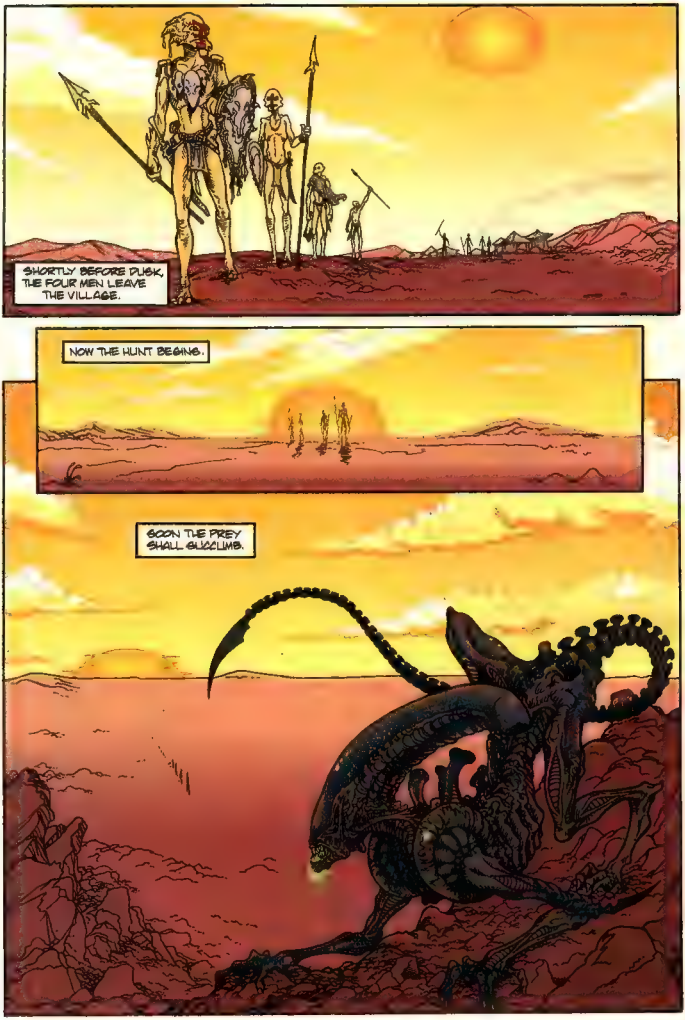

ONCE, SUCH A CRY WOULD HAVE BROUGHT THE WHOLE VILLAGE RUNNING.
AIEEE!
ONCE, BUT NOT NOW.
NOT AFTER SUNSET.
THEY ALL KNOW WHAT A SCREAM IN THE NIGHT MEANS.
THEY HAVE LEARNED WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE WHO TRY TO EFFECT AID.
SO TONIGHT'S SHRIEKS ATTRACT ONLY ONE SOUL, WHO COMES NOT TO HELP, BUT ONLY TO OBSERVE.
OBSERVE, AND PLAN.

DAWN, AND THE MEN OF THE VILLAGE RETURN.
THEIR LONG SEARCH FOR FOOD HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL, AND THEY ALL HOPE FOR A HEROES' WELCOME.
THEY DON'T GET IT.
What is this!? What has happened here!?
Oooohhh, why? Whyyyy?
They were her cousins, this family.
Al killed by the Night Reaper.
THE NIGHT REAPER. AGAIN. ALWAYS WHEN THE STRONGEST MEN ARE ON THE HUNT, AS IF IT CAN SMELL THE WEAKNESS.
THE FORAGING NECESSARY TO KEEP THIS COMMUNITY ALIVE--
--IS KILLING IT.

ENOUGH!!
Again we hunt, but this time, it is the Night Reaper who shall feel the points of our spears.
Who comes with me!?
COWARDS!!
Five moons have passed since this Night Reaper came with the wind-
-and for five moons it has fed on our women and children.
Is that not enough to anger you, to make you overcome your fear?
The Night Reaper is strong, Ar'Jum. Surely some of us would die on this hunt.
What of our families, our children?

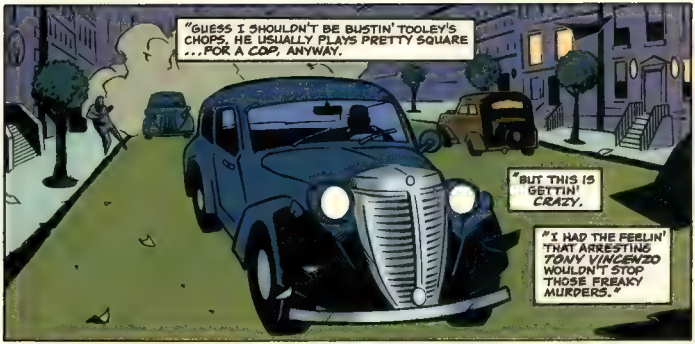
A sound argument, for the village is small!
Strong males are in short supply here.
Shug, Klum. You have no more families.
You go with me.
I also shall go.
Eh?
This is no game we play, BOY.
I am no boy.
I have almost eighteen summers.
Perhaps, but your mark shows me that you have not made a life, or taken a life.
These things make a man, not time.
Then I soon will become a man, for you need me on this hunt.
Need you? Why?


I have BEEN the Night Reaper.
You would not lie to your Chieftain, would you, BOY?
I-I would not.
NO, HE WOULD NOT.
AND WHILE ARJUM HAS HEARD DESCRIPTIONS OF THE NIGHT REAPER FROM THE VILLAGE WOMEN--
--HE WONDERS IF SO IMPORTANT A HUNT SHOULD RELY ON MERE DESCRIPTIONS.
I see you want this very much, boy. Give me your name.
Sudm.
Come to my den after the evening meal, Sudm.
But bring a larger spear.


SHORTLY BEFORE DUSK, THE FOUR MEN LEAVE THE VILLAGE.
NOW THE HUNT BEGINS.
SOON THE PREY SHALL BLEED.

"THESE MOBSTER MURDERS BEEN GOIN' ON ALL WEEK, TOOLEY. YOU CAN'T KEEP BRUSHIN' ME OFF!"
drip
drip
"WHAT'S THE POINT, MAX? NOTHING IN THERE'S FIT FOR A FAMILY NEWSPAPER, ANYHOW. GO FIND A NICE STABBING, WHY DON'T YOU?"
drip
drip
drip
drip
"WE KNOWN EACH OTHER TOO LONG TO PLAY THESE GAMES, TOOLEY... NOW LEMME IN!"
THE HUNTED CITY
PART TWO OF THREE
"I'M NOT PLAYING. NOW, PLEASE-- GET OUT OF HERE, MAX. DANGLE!"
drip
drip
"NO WAY, TOOLEY. I AIN'T LEAVIN' 'TIL... HEY! LEGGO!"

HEYY!!
BACK OFF!!
WHO'RE THE NEW SUITS, TOOLEY? YOU RECRUITIN' BERNIE JINKS' REJECTS NOW?
YOU OKAY, MAX?
THEY'RE FEDS, MAX. GOT NO CHOICE -- JUST DOING MY JOB.
I GOT A JOB, TOO, Y'KNOW.
ONE THAT YOU AND YOUR BEAU BRUMMELS HERE AIN'T KEEPIN' ME FROM!
NICE WORK, DETECTIVE. IT'LL LOOK GOOD ON MY REPORT.

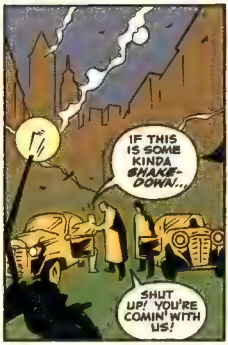

"GUESS I SHOULDN'T BE BUSTIN' TOOLEY'S CHOPS, HE USUALLY PLAYS PRETTY SQUARE ...FOR A COP, ANYWAY.
"BUT THIS IS GETTIN' CRAZY.
"I HAD THE FEELIN' THAT ARRESTING TONY VINCENZO WOULDN'T STOP THOSE FREAKY MURDERS."

"BUT NOW HE'S DISAPPEARED-- JUST LIKE MY FILM FROM THE LAB--

"--AND THE FEDS ARE SQUEEZIN' ME OUT OF THE PICTURE."
EVENING ROOKIE

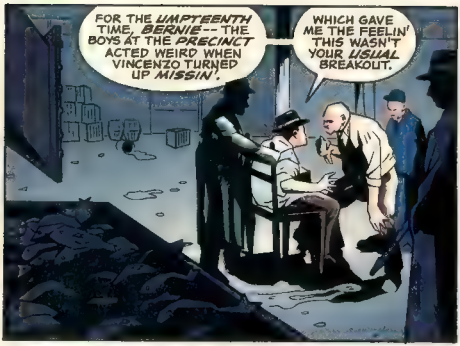
SHWAMM

@#!☆!#※ HOPPED UP SUM-BITCHES!


IF THIS IS SOME KINDA SHAKE-DOWN!..
SHUT UP! YOU'RE COMIN' WITH US!

"YOU'RE AN IMPORTANT MAN AROUND TOWN, MAX--"

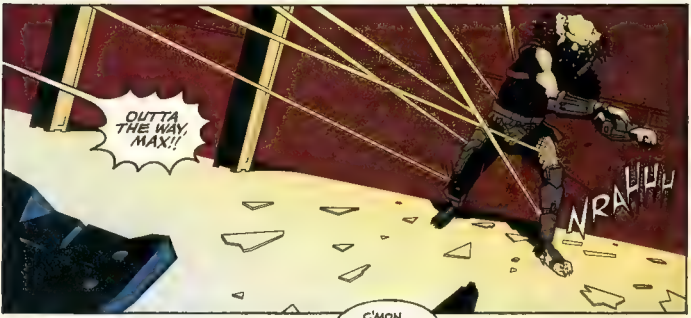
"BUT NOW THAT MY 'EMPLOYEES' ARE GETTIN' FILLETED LIKE MACKERELS...YOU DON'T KNOW NOTHIN'?"


FOR THE UMPTEENTH TIME, BERNIE-- THE BOYS AT THE PRECINCT ACTED WEIRD WHEN VINCENZO TURNED UP MISSIN'.
WHICH GAVE ME THE FEELIN' THIS WASN'T YOUR USUAL BREAKOUT.

YOU'RE AWFUL KEYED UP, BERNIE. HOLED UP IN THIS STINKIN' PLACE, SWEATIN' BULLETS...
--WHASSAMATTER? YOU WORRIED VINCENZO'S BACK ON THE STREETS LOOKIN' TO SETTLE OLD DEBTS?
I AIN'T AFRAID OF THAT KOOK!
"--BESIDES, EVEN ME AIN'T SCREWY ENOUGH TO KILL HIS OWN GUYS!"
"--THEY BEEN HIT LIKE ALL THE OTHER FAMILIES."
--GEEZ, IT'S HOT IN HERE! WHERE'S FRANCO?
UH, BOSS...
SKZZAK

SHPKSSH
FWP
SPLANCH
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
><...OUT OF HERE, MAX. DANGLE...><

AH-HEM.
SWIP
HI YA, BERNIE BOY...
UT
IT'S ALL YOURS, PAL.
TAKE IT. JUST LEMME GO--
"NICE BAUBLES. YOU'RE A WALKIN' PAWN SHOP, AIN'T YA?"
BRAMF
GWRRRRRRR



To be concluded next issue!

GRENDEL TALES

FOUR DEVILS, ONE HELL

In this climactic series-end finale, all four devils get what's coming to them—unfortunately, it may not be exactly what they expected. All this and the return of the vampires!

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MIKE MIGNOLA'S

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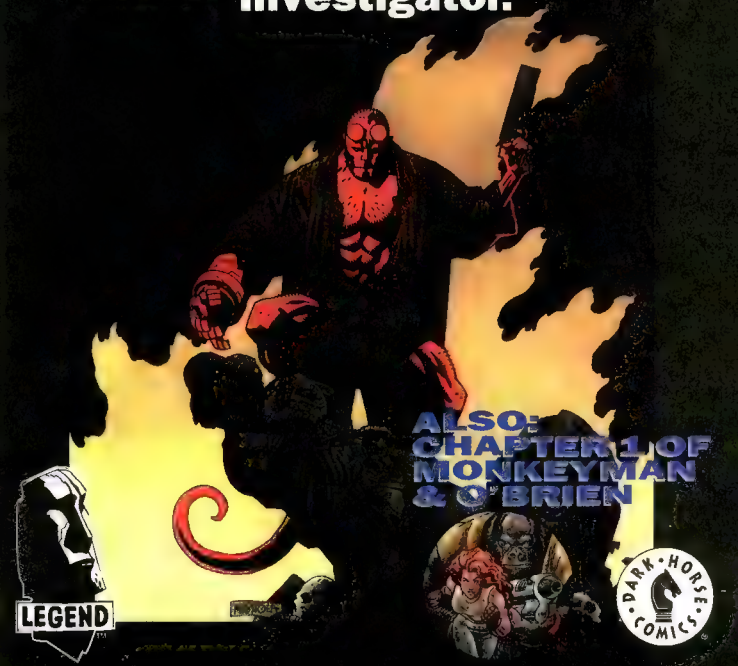
World's Greatest Paranormal Investigator.



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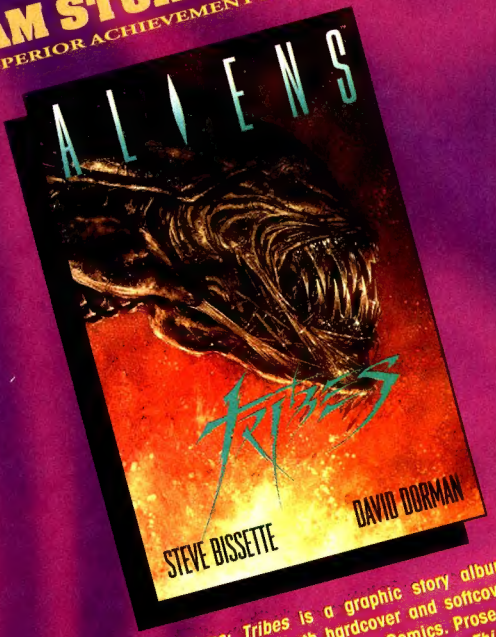
FOR SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN NOVELETTE



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FINISH LINE

I'm sure, to non-comics readers, comic books as an entertainment medium must seem an anachronism in these days of cable television, video tapes, video games, and interactive computer games—but one has only to look at the growth of the comics industry over the past couple of years to see that thousands of new readers are discovering the excitement, adventure, and entertainment to be found in comic books. The industry has not only expanded in breadth (i.e., the sheer number of comics sold), but it has also grown in depth; there are more titles, catering to more diversified tastes and interests than in any time since the fifties.

Whether you're a genre fan, looking for superhero action, science-fiction adventure, or a chilling horror story, or whether you're an avid follower of the works and visions of particular creators, there is much to be said for the medium. No other art or entertainment form combines the written word with visual storytelling to such an extent—a combination that allows you access to characters' thoughts at the same time you view their actions and which, when appropriate, can convey the dichotomy between the two in a manner at once elegant and immediate. Most exciting of all, the medium is completely interactive.

Don't believe me? Look at the page from X reprinted here (or virtually any multi-panel sequence in any comic book). Your mind "saw" the action taking place, but in reality you're looking at two-dimensional static images printed on a page. So where did the "action" come from? You brought it with you to the comic. The unmoving images on the page *interacted* with your imagination—your own personal set of expectations and suspension of disbelief. The action unfolded as quickly or as leisurely as you desired because you controlled the pacing. You "heard" the voices and their inflections and even the sound effects, yet no sound was generated (not to mention that the sounds you "heard" were unique to your reading of the page—your friends will "hear" their own version). You didn't have to insert a disk or tape, you didn't have to push a button or move a controller, and no special equipment was required. Does "interactive" get any better than that?

As a matter of fact, it does. Try this on for size: you're actually interacting with the ideas of a creator or creators—people whom you've never met and who, in most cases, made their contribution to the interaction months or even years before. Not only are you in touch with other people's imaginations across time and distance, but you never have to worry about the format becoming obsolete. Try that with a computer or video game.

All right, get out there and start interacting, but be back here next month when we'll hear from some of the most popular creators in comics as they discuss what makes the medium interesting for them. Happy reading!

Randy Stradley
Dark Horse creative director

JAN. CHECKLIST

SHIPPING JANUARY 11

- ☐ CHEVAL NOIR #50
- ☐ DARK HORSE PRESENTS #81
- ☐ DEAD IN THE WEST #2
- ☐ JOHN BYRNE'S NEXT MEN: FAITH #4
- ☐ OUT OF THE VORTEX #4
- ☐ PROPELLERMAN #7
- ☐ THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD: ETERNAL VOWS #2
- ☐ VERSION #2.5

SHIPPING JANUARY 18

- ☐ AGE OF REPTILES #3
- ☐ ALIENS: MUSIC OF THE SPEARS #1
- ☐ ANDREW VACHSS' UNDERGROUND #2
- ☐ CARAVAN KIDD PART 2 #6
- ☐ FLOATERS #6
- ☐ GRENDEL TALES: FOUR DEVILS, ONE HELL #0
- ☐ THE MARK #2
- ☐ STAR WARS: TALES OF THE JEDI #4

SHIPPING JANUARY 25

- ☐ ALIENS VOLUME 2 #20
- ☐ ALIEN LABYRINTH #4
- ☐ ALIENS/PREDATOR: THE DEADLIEST OF THE SPECIES #4
- ☐ DARK HORSE COMICS #17
- ☐ DARK HORSE INSIDER #27
- ☐ EDDIE CAMPBELL'S ALEC IN THE DANCE OF LIFEY DEATH
- ☐ ENEMY #2
- ☐ THE GEOF DARROW PRINT SERIES #1: BOURBON THIRST
- ☐ PREDATOR: BAD BLOOD #2

SHIPPING FEBRUARY 1

- ☐ CLASSIC STAR WARS #16
- ☐ ROBOCOP: ROULETTE #3
- ☐ SIN CITY: A DAME TO KILL FOR #3
- ☐ X #1

SHIPPING IN FEBRUARY

- ☐ THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON COLD-CAST FIGURE KIT

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